

has also freed enforcement vessels escorting the diverted vessels to return to patrol operations.

We continue to achieve a significant foreign policy objective in ensuring multinational participation in the MIF. Ships from Belgium, New Zealand, Italy, Canada, and the United Kingdom have served with the MIF since September, effectively refuting Iraqi assertions that the MIF is a "U.S.-only operation."

Other countries have made different but important contributions toward enforcing the U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Since MIF operations began, Panama and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have deflagged four vessels, and Honduras has enacted stricter sanctions enforcement measures and has continued to pursue deflagging proceedings against several vessels involved in sanctions violations.

The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia have assumed responsibility for disposition of the approximately 30,000 metric tons of Iraqi gas and oil cargo seized by the MIF and valued at about \$6 million. The United Arab Emirates and Kuwait have sold a portion of this cargo and are expected to turn over the proceeds to the United Nations. Saudi Arabia is preparing to sell a portion of the seized oil as well. The Iraqi dates seized by the MIF are subject to disposal in order to deny any benefit to Iraq.

Security Council Resolution 687 affirmed that Iraq is liable under international law for compensating the victims of its unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Although the U.N. Compensation Commission (UNCC) has approved some 790,000 individual awards against

Iraq, worth about \$3.0 billion, it has been able to authorize the payment of only the fixed awards for serious personal injury or death (aggregating approximately \$13.5 million). The remainder of the awards cannot be paid because the U.N. Compensation Fund lacks sufficient funding. The awards are supposed to be financed by a deduction from the proceeds of future Iraqi oil sales, once such sales are permitted to resume. However, Iraq's refusal to meet the Security Council's terms for a resumption of oil sales has left the UNCC without adequate financial resources to pay the awards. Iraq's intransigence means that the victims of its aggression remain uncompensated for their losses over 4 years after the end of the Gulf War.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined that Iraq comply fully with all its obligations under the U.N. Security Council Resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates peaceful intentions through its overall compliance with the relevant resolutions.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus January 4, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous submission covered progress through September 30, 1995. The current submission covers the period October 1, 1995, through November 30, 1995.

The focus of my Administration's activity during this reporting period was preparations for

the December trip to Cyprus of my Special Enissary, Richard Beattie. Mr. Beattie's travel reflects my interest in intensifying United States Government efforts to achieve progress towards an intercommunal settlement. His ongoing work supports the U.N.-led effort to attain lasting peace on the island. Consultations with the parties confirmed that security has not diminished as a key concern for both sides.

With respect to Cyprus' European Union (EU) accession process, in discussions with European officials and others, my representatives continued to urge that the EU engage both communities regularly to explain what EU membership would mean for a federal Cyprus state. Such dialogue would encourage the parties to use the period before accession negotiations to

establish a bizonal, bicomunal federation that could ultimately enter the EU.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Statement on Signing District of Columbia Continuing Appropriations Legislation

January 4, 1996

Today I have signed into law House Joint Resolution 153, which provides authority for the District of Columbia to continue full operations.

This measure continues the authority provided by the Fourth Continuing Resolution for FY 1996, which I signed December 22, and will enable the District to continue to operate, using District funds, through January 25.

Because H.J. Res. 153 allows the District government to continue to operate without disruption, it is a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, it is only a step. It does not end the partial shutdown of the Federal Government that continues to affect the Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, and Veterans Affairs; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the Small Business Administration; and nearly three dozen smaller agencies.

This shutdown is hurting millions of innocent Americans—such as the 600,000 senior citizens who may not get services under the “Meals on Wheels” program, or the 2,500 moderate- and low-income working families per day who cannot get their Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage loans processed. The longer the shutdown continues, the more Americans across the country will feel its impact.

The shutdown has forced the Administration to furlough 280,000 workers in these departments and agencies. And while the Administra-

tion has kept 480,000 others on the job because they perform emergency services, we cannot pay them until the shutdown ends. Thus, by not ending the shutdown, the Congress is disrupting the lives of three-quarters of a million Federal workers, most of whom live paycheck to paycheck and are having severe problems paying their mortgages or rent, buying food, and protecting their families.

I am concerned that this bill contains an objectionable provision that would single out poor women by prohibiting the use of District funds for providing abortion services. I oppose including this provision in the regular fiscal year 1996 District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, and I urge the Congress to send that bill to me—in a form I can sign—as expeditiously as possible.

Once again, I urge the Congress to end this shutdown immediately by sending me an acceptable continuing resolution to fund these departments and agencies, or acceptable fiscal 1996 appropriations bills for them.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
January 4, 1996.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 153, approved January 4, was assigned Public Law No. 104-90. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 5.